

JOHNNIE BEGINS SCHOOL

by
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Volume II ended with the birth of our second son, John Davis Sanborn. The following year, Donald Coolidge Sanborn was born, completing our family. Although I had longed for a little girl, I found that raising three sons was a tremendously interesting occupation and one which was full of joy—with one glaring exception. That was the year that Johnnie started to school.

Howie had entered school three years before and Johnnie could scarcely wait for his turn to come. I, in turn, waited expectantly for the boys to come home for lunch that first day of school so that I could hear all about what had gone on. Very little was said about school. Suddenly, Johnnie looked up from his plate, gave me the sweetest smile imaginable, and said, "I don't think I'll go to school any more."

Thinking that Johnnie was tired, and that any frustrations would be forgotten by the next morning, I let his remark slide by. But Johnnie never forgets ANTHING! The following morning, he was just as firm that he would not go to school any more and I was forced to take him screaming the entire three blocks to the school. This was repeated every day for two weeks until I was nearly a nervous wreck. At this point, his father offered to go to work late so HE could take Johnnie to school. Johnnie screamed just as long, and just as loudly. At the end of that week, Howard hit on the plan of giving Howie ten cents a day to take Johnnie to school. Howie, in turn, offered his cousin next door, Stewie, a nickel a day if he would help get Johnnie to school. They pushed and pulled but the screams went on.

To this day, the world argues as to the efficacy of rewards and punishments. I only know that I was desperate and that a reward DID work. Johnnie was yearning for a big Erector Set. I finally promised him that the day he went "happily" to school, he would find an Erector Set waiting for him when he returned for lunch. Did he stop immediately? Oh, no! He tapered off. By Thursday, the tears were still rolling but he had stopped screaming—long enough to say as he went

out the door, "Do I get the Erector Set now?" "No," I said, "only when you leave *happily*."

The next day he left with a broad smile, I had the Erector Set when he came home, and he stayed in school (without screaming) until he had his D.D.S.

Up until the time we left Glen Ridge, old neighbors loved to reminisce about the year the Johnnie started to school.